

Thomson Reuters Foundation announces winners of the 2023 TrustLaw Awards

LONDON (16 May, 2023) – The winners of the 2023 TrustLaw Awards have been announced at a ceremony in London, recognising the legal teams, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and social enterprises that have led ground-breaking pro bono projects seeking to address some of the world’s most pressing challenges.

Now in their 12th year, the Awards celebrate the extraordinary pro bono work undertaken by legal teams on behalf of NGOs and social enterprises through [TrustLaw](#), the Thomson Reuters Foundation’s pro bono legal service.

This year’s award-winning projects include research on Latin American climate regulations, the safeguarding of the rights of pretrial detainees in India and strengthening free speech by protecting whistleblowers from retaliation.

The ceremony, held in London on 16 May, was opened by the Foundation’s Chief Executive Officer, Antonio Zappulla OMRI. Speaking about the event, Zappulla said, *“Today’s award winners exemplify the amazing potential of legal pro bono. As we see every day, access to free legal expertise can have a powerful effect on an organisation’s ability to deliver positive impact for individuals and communities around the world. We are proud to work with our generous legal partners to provide support where it is needed most and are delighted to take this opportunity to celebrate their impact.”*

The event featured two fireside chats on topics fundamental to the Foundation’s work to advance media freedom, foster more inclusive economies, and promote human rights.

Caoilfhionn Gallagher KC, barrister, international human rights lawyer and expert in freedom of expression and open justice at Doughty Street Chambers, spoke to TrustLaw Director Carolina Henriquez-Schmitz about current threats to media freedom and how the law can be used to combat them.

Steve Trent, CEO of the Environmental Justice Foundation, sat down with Yasir Khan, Editor-in-Chief of Context, the Foundation’s digital news platform, to discuss how a human rights lens can help tackle climate change, as well as how pro bono legal assistance can best aid organisations fighting for climate justice.

2023 TrustLaw Award winners

With projects covering a multitude of sectors across the world, this year’s winners demonstrate the global scale of the TrustLaw service and its role in spreading pro bono.

The winners in the seven award categories are:

- 1. Collaboration Award:** Researching best practices on climate change regulations in South America

[Sustentabilidad sin Fronteras](#) and [Baker & McKenzie LLP](#), [Eversheds Sutherland LLP](#), [Ferrere](#)

[Abogados, Muñoz Tamayo y Asociados](#), [Hogan Lovells International LLP](#), [Allende & Brea](#), [Mattos Filho, Veiga Filho, Marrey Jr. e Quiroga Advogados](#)

While most Latin American and the Caribbean countries have taken steps to address climate change, the region's emissions are steadily growing. Sustentabilidad Sin Fronteras (SSF) is an Argentine foundation that works to fight climate change through advocacy, awareness, mitigation and adaptation. TrustLaw connected them to expert legal teams, who conducted research to identify, analyse and compare the climatic laws and regulations in the region to assess how they could be improved. SSF presented the report in the Argentine National Congress and have discussed its findings with key members of government.

2. **Impact Award: Safeguarding the rights of pretrial detainees in India**

[Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative](#) and [K&L Gates LLP](#), [Allen & Overy LLP](#), Nyoh Law Chambers, [Shearman & Sterling LLP](#), Sibtain Akhtar Bokhari

Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI) sought support from TrustLaw to produce research on the criminal laws and provisions safeguarding the rights of pre-trial detainees across the Commonwealth member states. The report aimed at collating all such safeguards currently available across the 54 member states of the Commonwealth and was used by CHRI to support efforts to advocate for collective action to reduce the use of pretrial detention in Commonwealth countries. The campaign led to the release of over 24,000 prisoners.

3. **Powered by Pro Bono Award: Promoting the right to freedom of expression internationally**

[Blueprint for Free Speech](#) and [Ritch, Mueller y Nicolau, S.C](#)

Blueprint for Free Speech was awarded for its work on the design of one of the first stand-alone whistleblowing laws in Latin America. This legislative process is crucial to advancing the protection of whistleblowers in Mexico. The country's whistleblowers regularly suffer retaliation, persecution and even physical violence while exercising their freedom of speech rights to speak up in the public interest. Blueprint requested pro bono legal assistance through TrustLaw to help them in drafting a model law for Mexico.

4. **International Law Firm of the Year**

The TrustLaw International Law Firm of the Year Award was given to [Dechert LLP](#) for providing free legal assistance on almost 40 pro bono projects, in three continents, including a large number of advisory projects and key multi-jurisdictional research.

5. **Regional Law Firm of the Year Award**

The TrustLaw Regional Law Firm of the Year Award was presented to [Cliffe Dekker Hofmeyr](#)

- [Kieti Law LLP](#) for its pro bono legal assistance on advisory and research projects in Africa.

6. In-house Legal Team of the Year Award

The TrustLaw In-house Legal Team of the Year Award was presented to [Accenture](#) for its pro bono legal assistance on advisory and research projects in Latin America.

7. Lawyer of the Year Award

Oscar Bjartell, Liz Longster, Timothy Neo and Gail Crawford, [Latham & Watkins LLP](#)

The team from Latham & Watkins LLP were chosen as this year's Lawyer of the Year Award winners by a public vote. They were nominated for their work with The Vavengers, a UK organisation that supports women affected by Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting and other forms of Violence Against Women and Girls.

Notes to editor

About TrustLaw

Since its launch in 2010, TrustLaw has become the world's leading pro bono service provider, with a network of more than 7,000 members (5,800 NGO and social enterprise members and over 1,000 law firm and corporate members) making more than 9,000 pro bono connections across the globe. Through TrustLaw, hundreds of leading legal teams across the globe have contributed the equivalent of more than \$240 million in legal know-how and brainpower to support mission-critical needs of NGOs and social enterprises on the frontlines of social change.

For more details about the winners, nominees and TrustLaw Awards, please visit www.trust.org/trustlaw/awards/2023.

About the Thomson Reuters Foundation

The Thomson Reuters Foundation is the corporate foundation of Thomson Reuters, the global news and information services company. As an independent charity, registered in the UK and the USA, it works to advance media freedom, foster more inclusive economies, and promote human rights. Through news, media development, free legal assistance and convening initiatives, it uses the combined power of journalism and the law to build global awareness of critical issues faced by humanity, inspire collective leadership and help shape a prosperous world where no one is left behind.

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